

Juvenile Services

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES • JUVENILE SERVICES SECTION • 805 EAST BROAD STREET • RICHMOND, VA 23219

JUNE 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2005 Update to the Three-Year Plan Under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

The Three-Year Plan is an application to the federal government for funding of Title II programs. A new Plan is submitted every three years; updates are required in the intervening years. The 2005 year is an update year.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Juvenile Services Section, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), uses the planning process necessary for development of annual priorities and funding goals for the Plan for all of its grant programs—Title II Formula Grants as well as Title V Prevention Grants, Juvenile Accountability Block Grant funds, and Challenge funds. The planning process includes data analysis and input from constituent groups. DCJS staff make recommendations to the Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice which makes the final determination of priorities.

PRIORITIES

Priorities for the 2005 Plan Update are shown in the graph. They include two additions to the 2004 Update—gangs and aftercare/reentry—and reordering of the 2004 priorities.

Virginia detains children in secure confinement far in excess of the national average. DCJS is supporting our sister agency, the Department of Juvenile Justice, which has undertaken a major initiative with the Annie E. Casey foundation to examine and modify detention policies so that only those children for whom detention is appropriate will be detained and non-secure alternatives placements will be sought for other juveniles.

The aftercare/reentry priority was added as the data indicate that juveniles released from Virginia juvenile correctional centers are re-offending at high rates. Re-arrest rates are over 75% after three years and re-incarceration rates are almost half. Programs that provide aftercare services and facilitate successful reentry into communities are needed.

PRIORITIES

2005 THREE-YEAR PLAN UPDATE

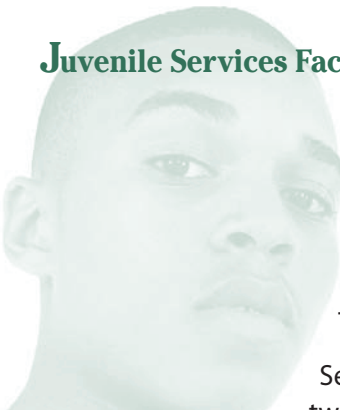
- Detention Alternatives
- Aftercare/Reentry
- Disproportionate Minority Confinement
- Mental Health Needs
- Sex Offenders
- Legal Representation
- Young Juvenile Offenders
- Rural Services
- Truancy
- Gangs

The number of young juvenile offenders in the system remains high—at arrest, intake, and in secure detention facilities. The DCJS Young Juvenile Offenders Initiative, for services and programs for children aged 13 and under, continues. Eleven Title II grants were funded in 2002 and 2003 and continue. A cross-site evaluation has also been funded. The data confirm the pattern of offenses at a young age leading to more serious delinquency. Of children committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice in 2003, almost three-fourths (73.5%) were first adjudicated at age 14 or younger.

The number of truants in the juvenile justice system continues to be of concern. Almost half of intake cases for status offenses¹ are for truancy. DCJS is partnering with the

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¹ Status offenses are those offenses such as truancy, purchase or possession of tobacco, runaways, and children in need of services that would not be offenses if committed by an adult.



Virginia Department of Education to address the truancy issue across the State using Challenge funds. As well, local truancy programs have been funded with Title II and Title V funds.

Several of the other priorities are intertwined—disproportionate minority contact, ensuring adequate legal representation of children, finding alternatives to secure detention. For example, if non-secure alternatives to detention can be found, one result may be to reduce disproportionate minority confinement. Improved legal representation of children early in the juvenile justice system may also reduce the number of children detained. Moreover, because many of the children without adequate legal representation are poor and African American, successfully improving legal representation may also reduce disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system.

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Number of Children in the System

There is not a straightforward answer to a question about whether the juvenile crime rate is down. The number of children brought to intake has remained stable since FY2000. In 2000, there were about 63,000 children brought to intake; in 2004, there were 64,000. The number of children confined in secure detention or juvenile correctional centers has declined but it is not clear whether this is from a change in delinquent activity or changes in policy or legislation. Admissions to secure detention have decreased from about 22,000 in FY2000 to 18,000 in FY2004, after more than doubling between 1985 and 2000. Commitments to juvenile correctional centers have decreased 30% over the same time period from 1,462 in 2000 to 1,036 in 2004. The arrest data are problematic and unusable for trend analysis with large gaps in the data because of the change from the uniform crime reporting system to the incident-based reporting system in 1999.

Intake Data

Of the 64,000 intake cases, about 75% were petitioned to court, 20% were diverted, and 5% were handled in other ways. About 2/3 of the cases were brought in for delinquent offenses. The largest delinquent offense categories remain unchanged since 1998: assault, larceny, narcotics violations and vandalism. One-sixth of cases were status offenses, about half of which were truants. One-sixth were technical offenses such as probation/parole violations or contempt of court.

Although minorities are overrepresented at intake, the data indicate that there is no bias in the decision to petition or divert.

Detention Data

In 2004, Virginia had almost 18,000 admissions to secure detention facilities representing about 11,000 children, of whom 7,000 were admitted once and 4,000 were admitted multiple times. Twenty-two percent of admissions were for probation/parole violations. About 20% were aged 14 and under—that portion is constant since 1998. About half of children in detention are African American. About three-fourths of children in secure detention facilities are predispositional. About three-fourths stay 21 days or fewer.

Juvenile Correctional Center Data

About 2/3 of commitments to juvenile correctional centers are of African American males. As would be expected, committing offenses are more serious than at earlier stages in the system and the children tend to be older. Nevertheless, in 2004 1/8 of commitments were of children aged 14 and under. About 35% are for offenses against persons such as assault, sexual assault and robbery. Burglary and larceny represent another 35%.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The 2005 Three-Year Plan Update, past updates, and the 2003-2005 Three-Year Plan are available online at <http://www.dcss.virginia.gov/juvenile> or in paper form from Aura Hanna by email at Aura.Hanna@dcss.virginia.gov or by telephone at 804.692.0977.

For information about individual grants, refer to the *Annual Report of Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice* using the contact information above.

